

Message Text

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62

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY OSLO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2861

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY PARIS

USIA WASHDC

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: NO, UK, EI

SUBJECT: PEOPLE'S PEACE PRIZE TO NORTHERN IRISH PEACE LEADERS

1. SUMMARY: IRISH PEACE MOVEMENT LEADERS RECEIVE DOLS 325,000 NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S PEACE PRIZE AT CEREMONIES IN OSLO. MONEY WILL BE USED TO BRING PROTESTANT AND CATHOLIC CHILDREN TOGETHER IN ATTEMPT TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION BETWEEN NORTHERN IRISH GROUPS. END SUMMARY.

2. NORTHERN IRISH PEACE MOVEMENT LEADERS BETTY WILLIAMS AND MAIREAD CORRIGAN RECEIVED THE NORWEGIAN "PEOPLE'S PEACE PRIZE" IN A CEREMONY NOVEMBER 30 IN OSLO CITY HALL, WHICH WAS TELEVISED LIVE THROUGHOUT NORWAY.

3. THE PRIZE, AMOUNTING TO NKR 1.7 MILLION (ABOUT DOLS 325,000), WAS COLLECTED IN A PUBLIC FUND-RAISING DRIVE INITIATED AND LED BY MAJOR NORWEGIAN NEWSPAPERS.

4. IN MAKING THE PRESENTATION, THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE NORWEGIAN PRESS ASSOCIATION STRESSED THAT THE PRIZE

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WAS NO SUBSTITUTE FOR THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE, BUT

SIMPLY A SPONTANEOUS EXPRESSION OF COMPASSION AND SUPPORT FROM THE NORWEGIAN PEOPLE FOR THE PEOPLE OF NORTHERN IRELAND.

5. IN A LATER INTERVIEW, THE MAIN FORCE BEHIND THE FUND-RAISING CAMPAIGN, FAEDRELANDSVENNEN FOREIGN EDITOR GUNNAR BORREVIK, SAID THE PEOPLE'S PEACE PRIZE WAS IN NO WAY A PROTEST AGAINST THE NOBEL PRIZE, AND HE EXPRESSED HOPE THAT THE TWO IRISH PEACE MOVEMENT LEADERS WOULD WIN THE NOBEL PRIZE NEXT YEAR AS WELL. HE NOTED THAT AT THE TIME OF THE DEADLINE FOR PROPOSING CANDIDATES FOR THE 1976 NOBEL PRIZE (FEBRUARY 1), THE IRISH PEACE LEADERS WERE COMPLETELY UNKNOWN.

6. AT A RALLY AFTER THE CEREMONY, CIRIAN MCKEOWN--ANOTHER OF THE IRISH PEACE MOVEEMNT LEADERS--TOLD A CROWD OF THOUSANDS, "WE HAVE A SOLUTION FOR NORTHERN IRELAND, AND IT IS BASED ON NON-VIOLENCE IN THE TRADITION OF GHANDI AND MARTIN LUTHER KING. WE NEED YOUR HELP. NOTHING MUST EXTINGUISH THE FLAME OF HOPE WHICH HAS BEEN KINDLED."

7. THE THREE PEACE MOVEMENT WORKERS ARRIVED IN OSLO NOV. 28 FOR A PROGRAM THAT INCLUDED AN AUDIENCE WITH KING OLAV AND MEETINS WITH THE STORTING PRESIDENT AND THE FOREIGN MINISTER. AT THE STORTING, OR PARLIAMENT, THE THREE WERE TOLD THAT THE PEACE PRIZE, BECAUSE IT CAME FROM THE NORWEGIAN PEOPLE, MEANT FAR MORE THAN ANY OFFICIAL PRIZE.

8. AT A PRESS CONFERENCE, THE THREE SAID THE CURRENT PROBLEM IN NORTHERN IRELAND IS NOT A PROTESTANT-CATHOLIC ONE BUT A PROBLEM OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GROUPS, WHICH HAS COMPLETELY BROKEN DOWN. AND THEY EMPHASIZED THAT THOSE WHO ARE SUFFERING MOST FROM THIS NOW ARE THE CHILDREN. BECAUSE OF THIS, THEY SAID, THEY INTEND TO USE THE PRIZE MONEY TO FINANCE EFFORTS, BY THE 168 LOCAL PEACE GROUPS THEY HAVE ESTABLISHED, TO BRING CATHOLIC AND PROTESTANT CHILDREN TOGETHER.

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THEY SAID A FOUNDATION WILL BE ESTABLISHED TO HANDLE THE MONEY, AND THAT UNTIL ALL DETAILS HAVE BEEN WORKED OUT, IT WILL REAMAIN IN A BANK ACCOUNT IN NORWAY.

9. ADDITIONAL FUND DRIVES ARE ALSO EXPECTED, THE THREE LEADERS SAID. THEY NOTED PARTICULARLY THAT DRIVES ARE UNDERWAY IN THE NETHERLANDS, WEST GERMANY AND FRANCE, AND THEY SAID THEY PLAN TO VISIT SWEDEN

EARLY NEXT YEAR.
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